

WE CLAIM:

1 1. A method for accumulating consumer sales transaction data
2 from a plurality of sales transaction sources for further use in
3 targeted advertising, the method comprising the steps of:

4 standardizing the consumer sales transaction data such that
5 the consumer sales transaction data conforms to a predetermined
6 format;

7 storing the standardized consumer sales transaction data on a
8 server comprising memory;

9 accumulating the standardized consumer sales transaction data
10 for each consumer such that a group of the consumer sales
11 transaction data relating to a specific consumer is assigned to
12 that consumer; and

13 segmenting the standardized consumer sales transaction data
14 such that a group of consumers can be defined by the group's
15 characteristics.

1 2. The method of claim 1 and further including the step of
2 cross referencing the standardized consumer sales transaction data
3 with consumer sales transaction data accumulated from the plurality
4 of sales transaction sources.

1 3. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of standardizing
2 includes grouping the consumer sales transaction data into a
3 plurality of data fields that are separated by delimiters.

1 4. The method of claim 3 wherein the data fields comprise a
2 field for a consumer's age, a field for the consumer's mailing
3 address, a field for the consumer's item of purchase, and a field
4 for the consumer's cost of purchase.

1 5. The method of claim 3 wherein the delimiters comprise
2 semicolons.

1 6. A system for the accumulation and segmentation of
2 consumer sales transaction data, the system comprising:

3 a plurality of transaction servers for storing consumer sales
4 transaction data from consumer sales transactions; and

5 a main database server, comprising memory, coupled to the
6 plurality of transaction servers and to the Internet, the main
7 database server additionally comprising an apparatus, coupled to
8 each transaction server, for downloading the consumer sales
9 transaction data from the plurality of transaction servers.

1 7. The system of claim 6 wherein the apparatus of
2 downloading comprises a dedicated data line to each of the
3 plurality of transaction servers.

1 8. The system of claim 6 wherein each of the plurality of
2 transaction servers is coupled to a modem having a connection to
3 the public switched telephone network.

1 9. The system of claim 8 wherein the apparatus of
2 downloading comprises a computer modem coupled to the public
3 switched telephone network.

1 10. The system of claim 6 wherein each of the transaction
2 servers is coupled to a satellite transceiver.

1 11. The system of claim 10 wherein the apparatus of
2 downloading comprises a satellite.

1 12. A method for the accumulation of consumer sales
2 transaction data, the system comprising a plurality of consumer
3 transaction servers and a main database server having memory, the
4 method comprising the steps of:

5 standardizing the consumer sales transaction data into a
6 predetermined format, thus generating standardized sales data;
7 storing the standardized sales data in the main database
8 server memory; and
9 accumulating the standardized sales data for each consumer
10 such that a group of the standardized sales data relating to a
11 specific consumer and gathered from at least one of the plurality
12 of consumer transaction servers is assigned to that consumer in the
13 form of a consumer data file.

1 13. The method of claim 12 wherein the main database server
2 memory comprises a hard drive.

1 14. The method of claim 12 wherein the main database server
2 memory comprises a tape drive.

1 15. The method of claim 12 and further including the step of
2 segmenting the standardized sales data for each consumer such that
3 a group of consumers can be defined by the group's characteristics.

1 16. The method of claim 12 wherein the step of standardizing
2 includes grouping the consumer sales transaction data into a series
3 of predefined data fields, each predefined data field being
4 separated from a preceding and a succeeding data field by a
5 delimiting character.

1 17. The method of claim 16 wherein the delimiting character
2 includes a semicolon and the predefined data fields include a data
3 field for the consumer's age, a data field for the consumer's
4 mailing address, a data field for the consumer's item of purchase,
5 a data field for the date of purchase, and a data field for the
6 consumer's price of purchase.

1 19. The method of claim 12 and further including the step of
2 the main database server downloading the consumer sales transaction
3 data from the plurality of consumer transaction servers over a
4 satellite system.

56